



Maricopa County

News Release

**Department of
Public Health**

1825/45 E. Roosevelt St.
Phoenix, AZ 85006
Phone: 602-506-4826
Fax: 602-506-6885
www.maricopa.gov/public_health

For additional information: Doug Hauth, Public Information Officer
(602) 506-4926, Pager (602) 205-3002
Stacy Weltsch, Public Information Specialist
(602) 506-6607

December 16, 2003

Flu Update for Maricopa County

Phoenix -- The Maricopa County Department of Public Health is working with the Arizona Department of Health Services in preparation to receive 300 doses of influenza vaccine for those at highest risk. A plan is being developed to distribute to high-risk individuals when the vaccine is received.

High-risk individuals are those who may suffer severe complications if infected, they include:

- Persons 50 years or older
- Persons two years of age and older who have chronic heart or lung conditions, including asthma
- Persons two years of age and older who have chronic kidney disease, diabetes, or weakened immune systems
- Children and teenagers two years to 18 years who are on long-term aspirin therapy

"We realize that 300 doses of flu vaccine will not go far," stated Dr. Jonathan Weisbuch, Chief Health Officer for Maricopa County. "Therefore, we request only those residents who are at high-risk for the severe complications of the flu come to be immunized. We want our limited supply given to those who need the most protection."

As always, continue to refer to <http://www.cir.org> or call (602) 263-8856 for further information on sites offering flu immunizations.

Currently, the Maricopa County Department of Public Health is reporting 884 laboratory confirmed flu cases. The total number of cases reflects voluntary reporting of confirmed flu tests from private labs, private physicians and healthcare organizations Valley wide over the past three months. Due to the increased awareness of flu in the Valley, many local laboratories have recently begun submitting their positive laboratory reports to MCDPH, including those from earlier in the season resulting in the sudden increase in the total number of reported flu cases reported.

-more-

Precautions recommended to keep from getting the flu include:

- Remember to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Clean hands often with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, if possible.
- Eat well, exercise and get plenty of sleep to keep up your immune system.
- Get immunizations for flu and pneumonia as recommended for your age and health conditions. Immunization can prevent many of the serious complications resulting from these respiratory illnesses.
- Sick children and adults should stay at home

People who are experiencing a sudden onset of flu symptoms, such as fever or extreme headache, consult with a medical provider or health plan. (See attached fact sheet for a complete list of symptoms for children and adults.)

###30###

Easily Spotted Symptoms Tell Parents if a Child Has a Cold or the Flu

You can keep your children and loved ones safe and healthy by knowing the difference between colds and the flu.

SYMPTOMS	COLD	FLU
Fever	Rare	Characteristic, high (102-104 degrees fahrenheit) lasts 3-4 days
Headache	Rare	Prominent
General Aches, Pains	Slight	Usual; often severe
Fatigue, Weakness	Quite mild	Can last up to 2-3 weeks
Extreme Exhaustion	Never	Early and Prominent
Stuffy Nose	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes
Sore Throat	Common	Sometimes
Chest Discomfort, Cough	Mild to moderate; hacking cough	Common; can become severe
Complications	Sinus congestion or earache	Bronchitis, pneumonia; can be life-threatening
Prevention	None	Annual vaccinations; antiviral medicines – see your doctor
Treatment	Only temporary relief of symptoms	Antiviral medicines – see your doctor

Parents know their children best and notice when their children ill. The following signs and symptoms are what parents should consider if their child is sick:

Signs:

- ✓ If your child has a high fever that does not respond to over-the-counter fever medications, this could signal a more serious infection.
- ✓ If your child is listless or has no interest in playing or other activities, especially after their fever comes down.
- ✓ If your child is inconsolable, that is, irritable and cannot be calmed down.
- ✓ If your child is not drinking fluids or not keeping fluids down. Poor fluid intake can lead to dehydration, which can be very serious in children. Prolonged diarrhea can also lead to dehydration.
- ✓ If your child has difficulty breathing, or exhibits fast, hard breathing. Flu is a respiratory disease that can infect the lungs, and if your child is working hard to breathe, your health care provider will need to assess the situation.
- ✓ It is important that to keep children home when they are ill to better care for them and to stop the further spread of this disease.

Symptoms:

- ✓ Fever, usually 102 degrees Fahrenheit, but can go up to 104 degrees Fahrenheit and usually lasts three to four days.
- ✓ Headache, sudden onset and can be severe.
- ✓ Sore throat.
- ✓ Muscle aches, often severe.
- ✓ Coughing, which can become severe.
- ✓ Tiredness and weakness, which can last two or more weeks.
- ✓ Sneezing.
- ✓ Runny nose.

To Stay Healthy:

- ✓ Clean hands often with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- ✓ Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- ✓ Avoid close contact with people who are sick, if possible.
- ✓ Get vaccinations for flu and pneumonia as recommended for your age and health conditions. Vaccines for these diseases can prevent some serious respiratory illnesses

###